

## Vehicle exhaust is linked to asthma in children

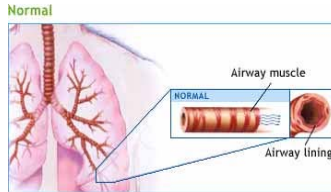
- ♦ Particles in air pollution can aggravate asthma and respiratory symptoms.
- ♦ Children are sensitive to air pollution -- their lungs are developing and they have a faster breathing rate.



### Did you Know?

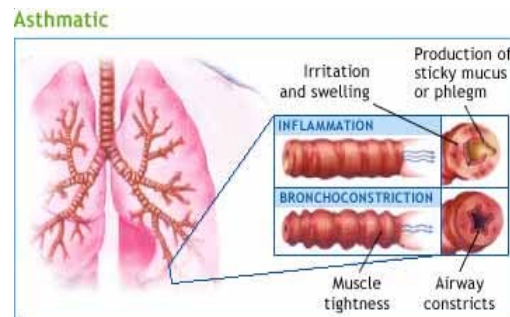
#### Asthma is a Growing Problem

- ♦ **Children diagnosed** with asthma **doubled** between 1983 and 1995.
- ♦ **13.2% of Maine children** have been diagnosed with asthma.
- ♦ Asthma related absences each year in Maine:  
**65,000** lost school days,  
**37,500** lost work days.



#### Asthma is a Serious Disease.

A chronic disease of the airways in the lung, the airways are hypersensitive to certain "triggers" in the environment. It cannot be cured but can be controlled with environmental changes to reduce exposure and medication. Asthma attacks are allergic reactions to triggers or exposures.



The airways swell and fill with mucus secretions, then muscles around the airways contract and spasm. Airways can collapse from excess swelling and spasm, causing shortness of breath.

*Look inside for a poster on the Effects of Common Air Pollutants.*



**Breathe Easier, Save Money, and Protect our Air and Health by turning off your vehicle whenever parked.**

**While there are no good reasons for idling, there are many good reasons not to idle:**

- ♦ It causes pollution;
- ♦ It can cause health problems;
- ♦ Idling wastes expensive fuel;
- ♦ Excessive idling can damage engine components.



#### *"It's for the health of the children."*

**Start a local Clean Air Campaign; spreading the word neighbor to neighbor, ensuring our school yards' are Clean Air Zones. Call now (207-287-2437) to obtain a Clean Air Campaign - Team Kit to get started.**

If you're a concerned parent, school nurse, teacher or student, you can form a local Clean Air Team to encourage your friends and neighbors not to idle in the school yard.

Our Clean Air Zone partners will provide you with the training and tools to get started (fact sheets, tip cards, pledge cards, window decals and magnets)(optional: school workshop materials). Then you'll pass on the tools to drivers when asking them not to idle.

Your school could also hold a student awareness workshop and even conduct a student research project to measure how successful your local Campaign is. Teachers, there's even an internet curriculum activity called **Switch Off** that provides student data forms.

**Explore the Ecokids DATA DETECTIVES Activity:**  
[http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco\\_info/topics/climate/anti\\_idling/activities/data\\_detectives/discussion.cfm](http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco_info/topics/climate/anti_idling/activities/data_detectives/discussion.cfm)



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ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN



## Maine Students are Breathing Easier this Fall



From Fort Kent to Portland, Maine school buses are a little greener this year. In addition to retrofitting school buses with pollution control equipment, many school districts are being proactive in reducing air pollution at our schools by establishing **Clean Air Zones**.

School bus drivers across the state are shutting off their engines in the school yard so students can breathe easier. Exposure to vehicle exhausts from buses, cars and trucks can pose health risks. Particles in exhaust can trigger asthma and aggravate respiratory ailments. Children are especially sensitive to air pollution, so the effort to reduce pollution in the school yard is really important to all of us.

With a grant from Maine DEP, school districts across the state are installing these new signs asking **all** drivers not to idle in the school yard when dropping off or picking up students.

Many local communities are even starting **Clean Air Zone campaigns** to urge drivers not to idle in other public areas as well.

It's an air-friendly action that's as simple as a flick of the wrist—turn off your car when you're not driving it.

It's not every day that a big problem—air pollution—presents an easy, no-cost solution—not idling. It results in healthier air for our school children. Plus, turning off the engine has the added bonus of saving fuel and reducing wear and tear on our cars. Now, isn't that a breath of fresh air?



For more information starting your own Clean Air Campaign, contact Lynne Cayting at the Maine DEP Air Bureau at 207-287-7028 or via email @ [lynne.a.cayting@maine.gov](mailto:lynne.a.cayting@maine.gov)